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Larson Visits Hartford Vet Center, Applauds President Obama's Efforts to Increase Funds to End Backlog of Veterans' Claims

Rocky Hill, CT- Last week, U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) visited the Hartford Vet Center in Rocky Hill to tour the facility as well as to speak to veterans about his efforts on their behalf and how his office can assist them. In addition to reviewing successful legislation, Congressman Larson lauded President Obama for advocating increased federal funding to end the gridlock slowing veterans' benefit claims.

The Hartford Vet Center provides quality care services to veterans and their families including combat trauma counseling and transitional services. Congressman Larson toured a mobile vet center, one of just 50 in the country that travels around the nation and provides similar services to the Center's.

"I am honored to work on behalf of the men and women who have bravely served our nation. My visit to the Hartford Vet Center allowed me to speak directly to veterans and hear their concerns. I am proud of the work done by the staff at the Hartford Vet Center, and I will continue to support their efforts to assist and provide essential services to our state's veterans," said Congressman Larson.

During his meeting with a roundtable of veterans, all of whom utilize the services at the Hartford Vet Center, Larson applauded President Obama for seeking a \$460 million increase in the VA's annual budget to end the backlog in veterans' claims for benefits. The funding will allow for the hiring of 4,000 additional claims processors.

Since 2000, there has been a 75 percent increase in veterans' claims, mostly due to the number of Agent Orange related illnesses. Recently, Congressman Larson assisted a Vietnam veteran from Rocky Hill, who was originally told his claim would take six month to process, receive his VA benefits.

Congressman Larson added, ***"The veteran was diagnosed with multiple myeloma. The illness is directly related to his exposure to Agent Orange from his service in Vietnam. After being told his claim would take six months for approval, he contacted my office asking for assistance. I wrote a letter to the Director of the Hartford Regional Office of the VA requesting his application be expedited."***

In less than a month, the constituent's claim was processed. He has started to receive the treatment and services he needs to combat the illness.

"The men and women that served our country with valor and heroism, like the veterans I met at the Vet Center and those my office assists on a daily basis, should not wait months and months for their claims to be processed. I applaud President Obama for making this issue a priority."

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